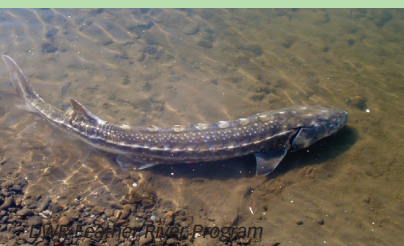


Feather River Regional Environmental Permitting Program

Efficient Implementation of Flood Management Projects

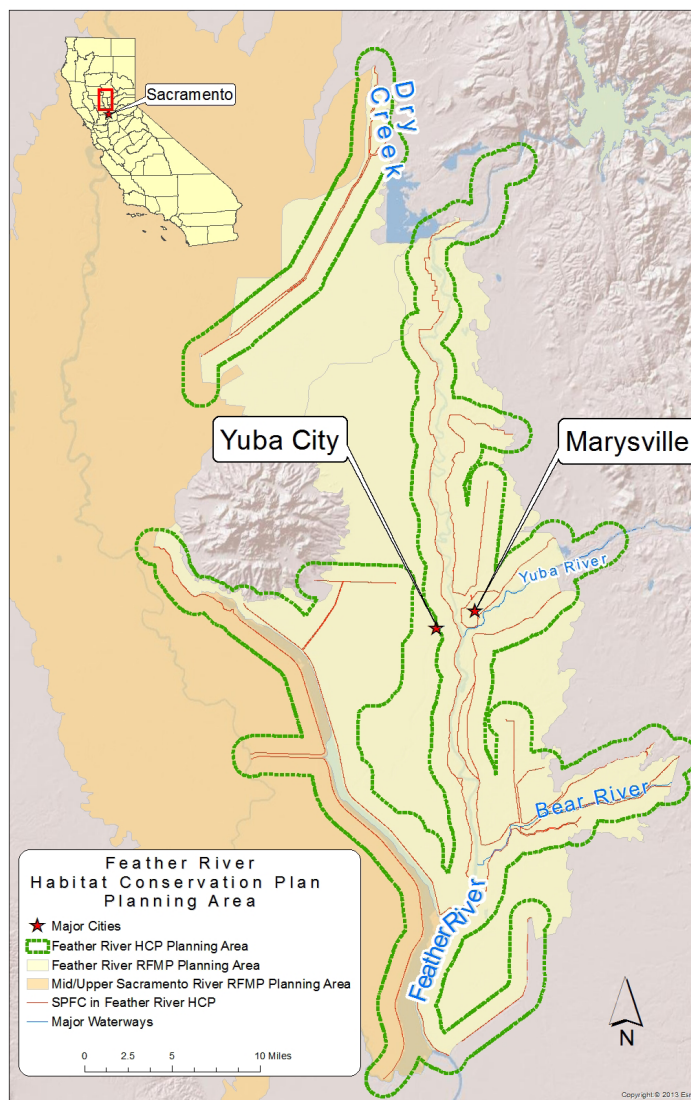


Implementation of the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan and Conservation Strategy will involve numerous flood management and conservation actions over a long time frame. These actions will primarily be implemented by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and Local Maintaining Agencies (LMA). Many of these activities will require regulatory approvals to ensure consistency with federal and state environmental laws including but not limited to the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), California Endangered Species Act (CESA) and Clean Water Act (CWA). "Project-by-project" compliance with these laws is historically inefficient, costly and unpredictable, often resulting in unsafe deferred maintenance and small isolated mitigation areas that are difficult and relatively costly to manage.

In recognition of the inefficiencies associated with the current project-by-project permitting approach, and recent indications from state and federal regulatory agencies that some projects may not currently fulfill all regulatory requirements, DWR is facilitating development of "regional permits." Regional permits will allow for compliance with environmental laws at a broad spatial scale (regionally) and over longer time periods than traditional permitting approaches. Additionally, the regional permits will be applicable to projects that are implemented by numerous entities including DWR and LMAs, on a voluntary basis.

Regional permitting may cover activities such as routine maintenance, structural repairs, reconstruction, improvements to or new levee construction, and multi-beneficial conservation actions such as levee setbacks, ecosystem restoration and enhancement, including the removal of fish passage barriers.

There is a need for regional permitting throughout the State Plan of Flood Control (SPFC), and DWR's approach may vary from region to region. DWR's initial CVFPP



environmental regional permitting effort is focused on the Feather River region (see Map) due to the extent of DWR's activities already occurring in the region. While the overall strategy may change as this process proceeds, DWR currently envisions obtaining the following regional permits for the Feather River region, which will be applicable to projects undertaken by DWR and LMAs.



Law to be Addressed	Type of Regional Permit or Regulatory Approval
Endangered Species Act (ESA)	Habitat Conservation Plan developed to satisfy ESA Section 10
California Endangered Species Act (CESA)	Incidental Take Permit through CESA Section 2081
Clean Water Act (Section 404) and Rivers and Harbors Act (Section 10)	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regional General Permit
Clean Water Act Section 401	Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board CWA Section 401 Certification
California Fish and Game Code Section 1600	California Department of Fish and Wildlife Master Streambed Alteration Agreement
National Historic Preservation Act Section 106	Programmatic Agreement
California Environmental Quality Act and National Environmental Policy Act	Joint Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement

Regional Permitting Benefits

The regional permitting effort's holistic approach will focus on integrating ecosystem improvements into flood risk management projects. Benefits of the approach include:

Communities and Landowners

- Promotes improved flood protection by increasing permitting efficiency and certainty;
- Improves public safety while ensuring the future of endangered and threatened species;
- Preserves and protects existing agriculture;
- Includes stakeholder involvement and collaboration throughout the permit development process.

Local Flood Management Agencies

- Reduces overall time and costs by simplifying the permitting process for participating interests;
- Reduces overall time required for agency coordination and project review;
- Achieves compliance with numerous state & federal laws;
- Incorporating optional conservation measures into activities and projects will benefit LMA's by decreasing maintenance costs, improving flood management efficiency and/or increasing public safety.

Environmental and Conservation Interests

- Improves efficiency and effectiveness of conservation efforts;
- Guides comprehensive conservation planning — promoting recovery of species & creating system-wide conservation benefits.

Feather River Regional Permitting Development Process

DWR worked with regulatory agencies extensively throughout 2013 to confirm the approach for developing regional permits. Beginning in 2014, DWR will work with local flood management interests to inform them of and request their participation in development of regional permits, and more broadly with community members to solicit their input on the process. DWR plans to produce a public draft Feather River HCP document and CESA 2081 permit application by 2016. This HCP will provide the necessary framework and content to support development of the other regional permits. DWR anticipates beginning implementation of the Feather River Regional Permitting Program in 2017.

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